

*Dayton School Department
Office of the Superintendent
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July 27, 2015

Dear Dayton Citizens,

I am writing today to offer the citizens of Dayton an economic "report card" as we wind down our first year as a newly-organized school department. Over the past year, the school committee, administration, and town selectmen have worked diligently to insulate Dayton citizens from rising educational expenses, in spite of uncertain state and federal subsidies. I am pleased to be able to share with you some positive financial news after our first year of operation as a school department.

At the town meeting in June, Board Chair Denis Elie spoke to citizens about the likelihood of increased educational subsidy once the state budget was completed in Augusta. The great news for the Dayton community is that we received an additional \$50,050 in educational subsidy. As promised, we are recommending using the new subsidy to decrease the mill rate from **\$21.10** to **\$20.77**. Last year the mill rate was set at **\$20.85** and with the additional state subsidy, we will be reducing the cost to taxpayers by 8¢ per \$1,000 of land valuation and a reduction in your taxes will occur.

Throughout the year, the school committee and administration continued to refine the initial budget to find additional savings by determining true costs for estimated educational needs, examining tuition and special education charges, redoubling student residency verification efforts in grades 6-12, and other efficiencies through shared service working with the Biddeford School Department. This continued budget scrutiny, even with unexpected financial surprises stemming from the withdrawal from the RSU, has left the school department with an unaudited balance of \$228,133.00. State law requires that these funds can *only* be used for educational purposes, as approved by the taxpayers.

In the upcoming year, the school department still has many challenges that it must confront in order provide the best education for Dayton students, while at the same time being sensitive to the concerns of taxpayers. Some of these capital-intensive challenges include septic system replacement, settlement of outstanding labor issues, and negotiating two collective bargaining contracts. These matters will reduce the amount of carryforward brought into the FY17 budget, however, the balance sheet looks good and I'm pleased with the amount of savings we've been able to help bring to the taxpayers of Dayton.

The school department is committed to look for other ways to control future costs for the taxpayers of Dayton. We welcome any suggestions that we can study in order to make the best decisions for students and citizen. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about the budget or ideas for the future.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Ray, Superintendent of Schools